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## NGOs address MIFEE on World Food Day, and publish investigation about Wilmar

By ADMIN | Published: OCTOBER 18, 2013

The 16th of October was World Food Day, and two groupings of Indonesian and international organisations have used the opportunity to publish reports or press releases on MIFEE.

The first of the two articles below, from Forest People's Programme together with Sawit Watch and Pusaka, launches a report ["A sweetness like unto death"](#), which is a detailed investigation into community attitudes towards one MIFEE company, Wilmar, based on a field trip to affected villages in May this year. The report is an in-depth assessment of how Wilmar has failed to engage in a process where the Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) of all sections of the community is sought, and explores what FPIC might mean in the Papuan context.

The same three organisations are joined by several others, representing most of the big Indonesian environmental and indigenous NGOs and networks as signatories to a press release, translated below. They call upon the government to cancel the MIFEE project, but analyse the problem within the wider context of food issues in Indonesia. MIFEE is symbolic of an approach to "food security" which is overly focussed on corporations and capital-intensive development. Indonesia needs to move beyond this and embrace the concept of "food sovereignty" which recognises the importance of small-scale food producers and local autonomy over food.

### **"A sweetness like unto death": Voices of the indigenous Malind of Merauke, Papua**

**Forest Peoples Programme, Pusaka and Sawit Watch**

16 October, 2013

This publication is launched on the occasion of World Food Day, marked by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations with the theme of "Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition". In particular, this report seeks to inform one of the key objectives of World Food Day: to encourage the participation of rural people, particularly women and the least privileged categories, in decisions and activities influencing their living conditions.

This shocking report provides the first detailed field study of communities' experiences with the Indonesia government's 2 million hectare Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) project. The study shows that MIFEE is undermining local self-sufficiency, throwing into doubt the government's national policy on food security based on promoting large-scale agricultural enterprises at the expense of local communities.

#### **Key findings of the report:**

- Sugarcane, oil palm and timber companies operating in Merauke are

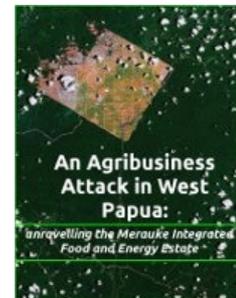
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### MIFEE Publication



Download the report "An Agribusiness Attack in West Papua: Unravelling the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate" published April 2012

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Three essays examining MIFEE in the three years since it was inaugurated, how it is impacting the Marind People and their efforts to oppose plantation development.

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failing to respect the right of the indigenous Malind people to withhold their consent to land conversion, and communities are giving their consent to land conversion based on deceptive information and restricted freedom of choice

- National and local regulations are either not being implemented, or interpreted to suit the interests of the companies and government, or inherently in contradiction with international human rights standards, and are in urgent need of reform
- The food security of the Malind is severely threatened by rampant land conversion to monocrop plantations without adequate guarantees of protection of their forest-based livelihoods from either the State or companies

This report examines the extent to which the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent ([FPIC](#)) of the indigenous Malind people of Merauke in Papua Province, Indonesia, is being respected by Wilmar-owned sugarcane company PT Anugerah Rejeki Nusantara (PT ARN), in the context of the MIFEE project.

The findings reveal that where local communities are giving their consent to the conversion of their customary lands, this is largely based on insufficient and one-sided information, non-guaranteed promises of economic and social welfare aid, unilaterally imposed terms of compensation, vague or non-existent contracts, and with little freedom of choice and expression. National and local regulations are either not being implemented, or interpreted to suit the interests of the companies and government, or inherently in contradiction with international human rights standards, and are in urgent need of reform.

Particular concerns are raised over the threatened food security of the Malind peoples in light of the conversion of vast areas of their customary lands to mono-crop plantations, as well as the consequences of this rapid and imposed transformation on their livelihoods, culture, identities and very survival as a people.

The findings in this report were used to support a [third civil society submission](#) under the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's Urgent Action and Early Warning Procedures, which led to [further recommendations](#) to the government of Indonesia for better recognition and respect of the rights of the indigenous Malind of Merauke from the CERD Committee.

#### Recommendations:

- The government of Indonesia immediately suspend any part of the MIFEE project that may threaten the cultural survival of the affected peoples and provide immediate support to indigenous communities – designed with their participation and consent – that have been deprived of their means of subsistence
- National and local regulations need to be revised and harmonised in line with existing human rights instruments, including with regards to the right of indigenous peoples in Papua to give or withhold their Free, Prior and Informed Consent to any project affecting their lands, territories and resources
- PT ARN and other companies operating in Papua, must provide comprehensive and impartial information to communities sufficiently in advance of any project going ahead, under conditions where communities are free to express themselves, and consult with them in ways that respect the right of communities to *withhold* their consent.

The report is available in [English](#) or in [Bahasa Indonesia](#).

Source: <http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/other-private-sector/publication/2013/sweetness-unto-death-voices-indigenous-malind-merauke-p>

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## **Sovereignty: Stop the MIFEE Project in West Papua**

Today, 16th October 2013, is World Food Day. This year FAO has chosen the theme “Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition”.

The reality of food security and nutrition in today’s Indonesia is in total disarray, as shown by the increase and volatility in food prices, the deluge of imported food products, the difficulty of obtaining quality affordable food, the way food development based on capital-intensive corporations is prioritised over peasant agriculture, the growth of commercial export crops which ignore local food needs, and the practices of middlemen and corporations which impoverish peasant farmers and create dependency.

Such trends illustrate the fact that the government has still not managed to move beyond the paradigm of “food security”. This has resulted in the increasing vulnerability of the most marginal groups, and has weakened Indonesia’s food supply system, which has become market-driven, controlled by and dependent on corporations. Another reason this has occurred is because government policy favours corporations over the alternatives: protecting people-centred food supply and developing small-scale enterprise, building just and easily accessible food supplies, and developing and making use of existing local food potential in line with the Law on Food – in other words, food supply that is sovereign and autonomous.

Another connected factor is the increasingly rampant conversion of forest land for development projects in the food and energy sectors based on large-scale investments, such as plantation forests, oil palm and sugar-cane plantations, or plantations of other crops. These plantation projects are clearly not solely intended to meet food needs, but are focussed on export crops and supplying the energy industry. These industries have been seen to cause widespread deforestation, ecological disasters and global warming. Rather than bringing food security, these plantations actually become a threat to the sustainability of food security systems.

In Merauke, Papua province, the Indonesian Government has issued a highly ambitious policy aimed at developing food and energy for the nation, known as MIFEE (Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate), which is based on large-scale investment, technological knowledge and modern organisation. More than 80 private companies have been issued with Location Permits which extend over 2.5 million hectares of forest, wetland and savannah. The companies aim to plant sugar-cane, oil palm, industrial tree plantations and other food crops.

The MIFEE mega-project has been implemented without a Strategic Environmental Assessment, and has already brought about significant changes which threaten the sustainability and self-sufficiency of the Malind People’s food supply. Most Malind people live within the MIFEE project zone.

The Malind people, who live from hunting and gathering forest products, are being forced out of their livelihoods, as it becomes harder to find animals and food plants in the forest. This means that people’s income and quality of life are declining. They are losing control over the means of production and their autonomy, and are becoming dependent on kiosks and shops for their basic foodstuffs. These are expensive, unaffordable on the low wage of a company worker.

The rate of forest conversion is increasing without any control over logging, draining swamps and rivers or clearing savannah, all of which alter their ecological and hydrological function, disturbing habitats and pollute rivers and wetlands. All this in turn reduces the ecological holding capacity and causes further problems for local people. Other important impacts include the increase in cases of difficulty of accessing sufficient food and clean water and malnutrition. In 2013 alone, five young children have died in Kampung Zanegi, Animha District, believed to be due to

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malnutrition.

Similarly, cases of violence involving the Indonesian army have also increased as people are forced to release their land, either to corporations or for the MFEE project's supporting infrastructure.

Because of all this, we see it as necessary to recommend and urge the Indonesian government to take steps to develop policy which make food sovereignty a reality in Indonesia and to immediately halt all parts of the MIFEE project which threaten the continuity of the Marind people's livelihood. This would mean:

1. Conducting a review, evaluation and plan of each piece of policy and company permit which assumes control over the means of food production, land and natural resources, as well as the market and institutions which play a role in the aspirations of everyday people. The aim should be that this control is returned to the people, for them to develop, manage and use them according to their needs.
2. Urging the Indonesian government to protect and respect the rights of indigenous people, peasants, fisherfolk and rural inhabitants, to enable them to defend and consolidate their own livelihoods by empowering themselves to fulfill and develop food supplies based on their knowledge and socio-cultural systems, in a way that is just and sustainable.
3. Urging the Indonesian government to provide data about, support, promote and develop food sources that are managed by the people themselves.
4. Recommending that the Indonesian government requests and accepts the requests of UN Special Rapporteurs on Indigenous People's Rights, the Right to Food, and Contemporary Forms of Slavery to make field visits. This would support the fulfilment of Indonesia's international obligations, including those connected to the rights of Papuan indigenous peoples.

Specifically with this press release, we are also launching a report into PT Anugerah Rejeki Nusantara's sugar-cane plantation project. This company is owned by Wilmar International, one of the companies investing in MIFEE. The report, called "A sweetness like unto death: Voices of the Indigenous Malind of Merauke, Papua", and was produced by the Forest Peoples Programme, Pusaka and Sawit Watch in 2013.

This report attempts to provide inspiration for one of the main aims of World Food Day, which is to support the participation of rural peoples, especially women and those who have the least authority, in decision-making and any activity that would have an influence over their lives.

Thank-you,

This Press Release was issued by:

1. WALHI Eksekutif Nasional, Jakarta
2. Forest Peoples Programme, UK
3. SAWIT WATCH, Bogor
4. Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), Jakarta
5. Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria (KPA), Jakarta
6. PUSAKA, Jakarta
7. HUMA, Jakarta
8. Greenpeace Indonesia, Jakarta
9. Transparansi untuk Keadilan Indonesia, Jakarta
10. Vivat Indonesia, Jakarta
11. FORMASI SSUMAWOMA, Merauke
12. Indonesia Human Rights Committee for Social Justice, Jakarta
13. Sarekat Hijau Indonesia, Jakarta.

Source: <http://pusaka.or.id/surat-pernyataan-pers-wujudkan-keadilan-pangan-rakyat-hentikan-proyek-miffee-di-papua/>

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